



Growing Mid Wales Partnership

Present: Councillor Ellen Ap Gwyn – Leader: Ceredigion County Council
Councillor Rosemarie Harris – Leader: Powys County Council

Councillor Myfanwy Alexander – Cabinet Portfolio Holder: Education and the Welsh Language (Powys County Council)
Councillor Martin Weale – Cabinet Portfolio Holder: Regeneration and Planning (Powys County Council)

Ann Elias – Ceredigion County Council
Ann Watkin – Welsh Government
Caroline Turner – Chief Executive: Powys County Council
Carwyn Jones-Evans – Ceredigion County Council
Claire Miles – Mid Wales RET
Councillor Dafydd Edwards – Cabinet Portfolio Holder: Highways and Environment including Housing (Ceredigion)
Eifion Evans – Chief Executive: Ceredigion Council
Hayley Thomas – Powys Teaching Health Board
Helen Jones – Visit Wales – Welsh Government (on behalf of Rob Holt)
Hywel Davies – University of Wales: Trinity Sant David (on behalf of Jane Davidson)
Jane Lewis – SW and MW Regional Skills Partnership
Joe Mault – National Farmers Union Cymru
Julian Atkins – Brecon Beacons National Park Authority
Lowri Gwilym – Welsh Local Government Association
Mark Dacey – Neath Port Talbot Group of Colleges
Matt Marshall - Coleg Ceredigion
Nigel Brinn –Director: Powys County Council
Nia Williams – Mid Wales Joint Committee
Paul Evans – Bronllys Estates
Peter Davies – Farmers Union of Wales
Rhian Hayward – Aberystwyth Innovation and Enterprise Campus Ltd.
Councillor Rhodri Evans – Cabinet Portfolio Holder: Economy and Regeneration (Ceredigion)
Rowland Rees-Evans – Mid Wales Tourism
Susan Yapp – Welsh Government (in place of Helen Minnie-Smith)
Vanessa Naughton – Welsh Government

Ben Rawlence – Black Mountains College – in attendance for item 3

Apologies: Councillor Phyl Davies - Cabinet Portfolio Holder: Highways Transport and Recycling (Powys County Council)

Arwyn Watkins – Cambrian Training
Gwilym Davies – Powys County Council
Helen Minnice-Smith – Welsh Government
Jane Davidson – University of Wales: Trinity Sant David (representative attended)
Jenni Thomas – Powys County Council
Nina Davies – Powys County Council
Peter Skitt – Hywel Dda University Health Board / Mid Wales Joint Committee
Rhodri Griffiths – Welsh Government
Rob Halford – Welsh European Funding Office

Rob Holt – Welsh Government (representative attended)
Steve Hughson – Chief Executive: Royal Welsh Show

Minute from a meeting of the Growing Mid Wales Officer Partnership held on Friday 12th July 2019 in The Council Chamber, Powys County Hall, Llandrindod Wells.

		Action
1.	<p>MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING – 12TH APRIL 2019</p> <p>The minutes from the previous meeting held on Friday 12th April 2019 were confirmed as a correct record subject to including Nigel Brinn – Director: Powys County Council; Caroline Turner – Chief Executive: Powys County Council and Steve Hughson – Chief Executive of RWAS in the list of attendees. There were no matters arising from the Minutes for discussion/update.</p>	
2.	<p>GROWTH DEAL - PROGRESS UPDATE</p> <p>During discussion and update particular reference was made to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. UK and Welsh Governments – there had been on-going dialogue between the Leaders of both Cabinets (Powys and Ceredigion) and representatives from the UK and Welsh Governments. Both Governments would welcome progressing the Mid Wales Growth Deal at pace and had stressed the importance of demonstrating learning from the three Welsh Growth Deal Programmes that were more advanced b. Joint Committee – the Inter Authority Agreement has been approved and the Joint Committee, comprising of five members from each Council Cabinet (Ceredigion and Powys), had held a shadow meeting. A framework for operating and a progress plan to drive forward on the Growth Deal are under discussion c. Economic Strategy Group – it would be important to constitute the Economic Strategy Group which would sit under the Partnership. All positions on the ESG would be voluntary. Appointment to the ESG would be by approach from each Local Authority area. The chair position would require Ministerial ratification. The role of the Chair would be very important d. Growing Mid Wales Partnership Group – GMW Partnership still has an important role to play going forward, advising on and overseeing the strategy direction of regional economic development in Mid Wales e. Status / Awareness Raising / Promotion – it would be important to raise awareness of, and to promote, the work of the Joint Committee and the Economic Strategy Group f. Programme Office – funding has been identified to support the work of a programme office especially in the light of the UK and Welsh Government's direction to pick up on pace (the project office would be likely to be a virtual Powys/Ceredigion office) g. Mid Wales RLSP - work is underway in conjunction with Aberystwyth University to establish a Mid Wales RLSP. Rhodri Llwyd Morgan has led on an application to WG and funding has been confirmed. Officers are currently awaiting further detail 	
3.	<p>BLACK MOUNTAINS CAMPUS – PROSPECTIVE PROJECT</p> <p>The Chair welcomed Ben Rawlence to the meeting to update on the Black Mountains College project and present a summary of the Outline Business Case. During discussion and update particular reference was made to:</p>	

	<p>a. Project – the project had achieved registered charity status, there are two full time employees and seven Trustees</p> <p>b. Learning Experience – the campus would use the National Park as a classroom and provide a new learning experience at HE/FE, vocational and pre-graduate level. There is global recognition of the project and support/interest from very far afield for a new model of HE learning. There would be a strong focus on 'local' for all activities</p> <p>c. Skills not Subjects – the 'skills not subjects' approach is becoming a preferred choice with employers. Multi-disciplinary teaching and courses of this nature are likely to become more widespread over time. The campus would be flagship in that regard. The style of learning would fit well with the incoming Donaldson Curriculum. The campus would complement (not replace) current learning networks. There had been good links with existing HE/FE providers to-date, and a framework agreement with NPTC Group is in development</p> <p>d. Employer Links – there would be a strong focus on supporting local businesses to grow. Placing learners with potential employers to support those businesses at the same time as developing students' skills would be important. There are some barriers to placement/apprenticeship schemes due to the need to satisfying accreditation requirements in some areas. The requirement for learners to be on the payroll can be a barrier to apprenticeship</p> <p>e. Intake/Local Employment – the Outline Business Case identifies a range of skills gaps that the college would help fill through up-skilling and retaining young people as well as encouraging local immigration. . The project proposes to create over 50 employee positions (potentially up to 100) and at capacity the site could accommodate 600 learners (intake projections/proposals are - 100 English students, 50 local Powys students and 50 international students)</p> <p>f. Introduction – the project would be introduced in phases up until 2024 when the site would be operational. When operational the Gross Value Added to the regional economy would be £30m p.a.</p> <p>g. Viability – Ben reported that FE courses would require 4 learners in order to be viable. The position was challenged in view of the Welsh Audit Office having stated that 9 learners would be needed in order to sustain learning courses (12 learners if courses were Welsh medium). Mark Darcey from NPTC pointed out that those figures refer to secondary education and that adult community learning has always operated at low numbers, and affirmed NPTC's interest in working with BMC on its community-based and FE programme. The ensuing discussion raised a few concerns regarding the proposal, a principal one being the ongoing issues with regard to finance in HE and the amount of investment needed to establish a new HE institution</p> <p>Hywel Davies took the opportunity to inform the meeting that UWTSO had confirmed they would ensure the future of their Lampeter campus.</p> <p>Mark Dacey, NPTC Group voiced his support for the project and stated it had the potential to solve some of the issues with skills delivery in a rural community.</p>	
4.	<p>REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLANS</p> <p>Ann Watkins, Welsh Government provided an updated in relation to Regional Economic Delivery Frameworks during which particular reference was made to:</p> <p>a. Regional Frameworks – WG are in the process of developing 'Regional Economic Development Frameworks' to sit under the WG Economic Action Plan announced last year. It would be the intention that frameworks would span more than the life of one government</p> <p>b. Regional Areas – for administrative purposes the Welsh Government would work to a three-region model. However, this model would take account of</p>	

	<p>regional situations and schemes that are operating/proposed. Each region would have a Chief Regional Officer. It is hoped that there will be a unified vision for each region developed in partnership with all regional stakeholders, which would identify regional priorities that would deliver on regional ambitions. Collaboration and co-design would be key. It was suggested that the regional footprint could follow the Growth Deal areas and become four areas as opposed to three. Ann reported that the three area split had been purely to fit with administrative functions.</p> <p>c. Ambition – the ambition of the Welsh Government through its regional economic framework would be to promote economic growth across Wales as opposed to the current situation where there are pockets of growth/activity and wealth in some areas and not in others</p> <p>d. Alignment – the Welsh Government would align its priorities/activities in a cohesive cross-government approach to deliver on the priorities for growth in each region. Local information would shape the direction of the Welsh Government in relation to its activities.</p> <p>e. Engagement – there had been some initial engagement with Local Authority areas in order to begin to shape frameworks, however, there would be a period of more focused and significant engagement during the summer months and into the autumn period</p>	
5.	<p>SOUTH WEST AND MID WALES EMPLOYMENT AND SKILLS PLANS 2019/2020</p> <p>Jane Lewis – Regional Skills Partnership updated on the South West and Mid Wales Employment and Skills Plans for 2019/2020. During discussion and update particular reference was made to:</p> <p>a. Engagement – the Welsh Government had invited businesses to engage through an online survey. The survey aimed to capture information in relation to the needs of businesses. 960 responses were received across the South West and Mid Wales Region</p> <p>b. Mid Wales Region – of the 960 business responses received, 214 were from businesses based/operating from Mid Wales. 132 of the 214 returns were from ‘micro businesses’ which employed 10 or fewer staff</p> <p>c. Apprenticeships – 75% of businesses had responded to say that they had not been able to support apprentice schemes because they would not have been able to fund positions or they were unaware of how to access the schemes. There was a short discussion on the difficulties associated with accreditation requirements in order to allow awards to be made on completion of schemes</p> <p>d. Priorities – the priorities for local businesses were for institutions to provide learning and skills appropriate for employment and to improve work based learning programmes so that they could operate better</p> <p>e. 3 Year Plan – at a meeting on 17th July there would be further discussion in relation to priorities to include in a three-year plan. The three year plan would be determined at a meeting set for 24th July</p>	
6.	<p>TARGETED REGENERATION INVESTMENT PROGRAMME</p> <p>The Partnership accepted an update paper as presented to the meeting which included details of projects (and pipeline projects) that were being progressed. Three regional projects are due for imminent approval. It would be important to maximise the drawdown of funding and for the Welsh Government to agree schemes given the need to spend in year.</p>	
7.	<p>REGIONAL ENGAGEMENT REPORT – QUARTER 2</p>	

	<p>The Partnership accepted an update paper as presented to the region. During discussion and update particular reference was made to:</p> <p>a. Regional Vision for Growth – workshop sessions had been held in order to help shape the vision for regional growth. Details of the issues from the workshops would be circulated to partnership members in due course</p> <p>b. Brexit Our Land – Lowri Gwilym, WLGA, provided feedback on developments relating to the Brexit and Our Land consultation being led by WG Rural. The Welsh Government wants a focus on sustainable farming and there would be a strong emphasis on agriculture and sustainable land management. There would be a requirement for individual farm visits to assess individual situations/applications. The resource needed would be significant. There had been close working between WLGA and the National Farming Union and Farming Union of Wales. There were concerns in relation to having to arrive at a decision regarding the proposed the day before the Country knows the outcome of Brexit. The UK Government had committed to support farming until 2022 at the same or similar levels, the position thereafter is unclear. There would be ongoing lobbying at the Welsh Government for farming support. It was agreed that it would be important for a Partnership response. The matter would be an item for the next meeting and a draft response should be submitted prior to that meeting for comments</p>	Claire Miles
8.	<p>CONNECTIVITY AND INFRASTRUCTURE WORKING GROUP – QUARTER 2</p> <p>Having reviewed a Connectivity and Infrastructure Working Group Quarter 2 2019/20 report as presented to the meeting particular reference was made to:</p> <p>a. Joint Marches and Mid Wales Transport Forum – the Minister for Transport UK Government and Welsh Government Minister for Economy and Transport have indicated their support in establishing a Ministerial cross border forum for transport .</p> <p>b. NAFW EIS Committee – TraCC would form a regional response to the committee's current enquiry into the decarbonisation of transport.</p>	
9.	<p>DATE OF NEXT MEETING</p> <p>The next meeting would be held on Friday 18th October 2019 at Aberaeron.</p>	

**COUNCILLOR ELLEN AP GWYNN - LEADER
CEREDIGION COUNTY COUNCIL
IN THE CHAIR**